

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
MADAME GUYON.
COMPLETE IN TWO PARTS**

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Autobiography of Madame Guyon. Complete in Two Parts by Jeanne Guyon

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JEANNE GUYON

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OF

MADAME GUYON,

Marie Baugier des Isles, France

COMPLETE IN TWO PARTS.

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1880.



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INTRODUCTION.

In the history of the world few persons have attained to that high degree of spirituality reached by Madame Guyon.

Born in a corrupt age, and in a nation marked for its degeneracy; nursed and reared in a Church, as profligate as the world in which it was embedded; persecuted at every step of her career; and groping as she did in the midst of spiritual desolation and ignorance, nevertheless, she arose to the highest pinnacle of pre-eminence in spirituality and Christian devotion.

She lived and died in the bosom of the Catholic Church; yet was tormented and afflicted; was maltreated and abused; and was imprisoned for years by the highest authorities of that Church.

Her sole crime was that of loving God; the ground of her offence was found in her supreme devotion, and unmeasured attachment to Christ. When they demanded her money and estate, she gladly surrendered them, even to her impoverishment, but it availed nothing. The crime of loving him in whom her whole being was absorbed, never could be mitigated, or forgiven.

She loved only to do good to the bodies and souls of her fellow-creatures, and to such an extent was she filled with the Holy Ghost, and with the power of God, that she wrought wonders in her day, and has not ceased to influence in a marked degree the ages that have followed.

Viewed from a human standpoint, it is a sublime spectacle, to see a solitary woman subvert all the machinations of kings and courtiers; laugh to scorn all the malignant enginery of the Papal inquisition, and silence, and confound the pretensions of the most learned divines. She not only saw more clearly the sublimest truths of our most holy Christianity, but she basked in the clearest and most beautiful sunlight while they groped in darkness. She grasped with ease the deepest and sublimest truths of holy Writ, while they were lost in the mazes of their own profound ignorance.

One distinguished divine was delighted to sit at her feet. At first he heard her with distrust; then with admiration. Finally he opened his heart to the truth, and stretched forth his hand to be led by this eminent saint of God into the holy of holies where she dwelt. We allude to the distinguished Archbishop Fenelon, whose sweet spirit and charming writings have been a blessing to every generation following him; and who was, perhaps, never esteemed more than he is at this day.

We offer no word of apology for publishing in the

Autobiography of Madame Guyon, those expressions of devotion to her Church, that found vent in her writings. She was a true Catholic when Protestantism was in its infancy.

There can be no doubt that God, by a special interposition of his Providence, caused her to commit her life so minutely to writing. The duty was enjoined upon her by her spiritual director, whom the rules of her Church made it obligatory upon her to obey. It was written while she was incarcerated in the cell of a lonely prison. The same all-wise Providence preserved it from destruction, and we have not a shadow of doubt that it is destined to accomplish ten-fold more in the next century than it has ever accomplished in the past. Indeed, the Christian world is only just beginning to understand and appreciate it, and the hope and prayer of the publisher is, that thousands may, through its instrumentality, be brought into the same intimate communion and fellowship with God, that was so richly enjoyed by Madame Guyon. E. J.

MADAME GUYON.

PART ONE.

CHAPTER I.

As you thought there were omissions of importance in the former narration of my life, I willingly comply with your desire, in giving you a more circumstantial relation; though the labor seems rather painful, as I cannot use much study or reflection. My earnest wish is to paint in true colors to your view, the goodness of God to me, and the depth of my own ingratitude—but it is impossible, as numberless little circumstances have escaped my memory, and you are also unwilling I should give you a minute account of my sins. I shall, however, try to leave out as few faults as possible, and I depend on you to destroy it, when your soul hath drawn those spiritual advantages therefrom, which God intended, and for which purpose I am willing to sacrifice all things, being fully persuaded of his designs toward you, as well for the sanctification of others, as for your own sanctification.

But let me assure you, this is not attained, save through pain, weariness and labor; and it will be reached by a path that will wonderfully disappoint your expectations. Nevertheless, if you are fully convinced that it is on the NOTHING in man that God establishes

his greatest works,—you will be in part guarded against disappointment or surprise. He destroys that he might build; for when he is about to rear his sacred temple in us, he first totally razes that vain and pompous edifice, which human art and power had erected, and from its horrible ruins a new structure is formed, by his power only.

Oh, that you could comprehend the depth of this mystery, and learn the secrets of the conduct of God, revealed to babes, but hid from the wise and great of this world, who think themselves the Lord's counsellor's, and capable of investigating his procedures, and suppose they have attained that divine wisdom hidden from the eyes of all who live in self, and are enveloped in their own works, and who by a lively genius and elevated faculties mount up to heaven, and think to comprehend the height and depth and length and breadth of God.

This divine wisdom is unknown, even to those who pass in the world for persons of extraordinary illumination and knowledge. To whom then is she known, and who can tell us any tidings concerning her? Destruction and death assure us, that they have heard with their ears of her fame and renown. It is, then, in dying to all things, and in being truly lost to them, passing forward into God, and existing only in him, that we attain to some knowledge of the true wisdom. Oh, how little are her ways known, and her dealings with her most chosen servants! Scarce do we discover anything thereof, but surprised at the dissimilitude betwixt the truth we thus discover and our former ideas of it, we cry out with St. Paul, "Oh, the depth of the knowledge and wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his

judgments, and his ways past finding out." The Lord judgeth not of things as men do, who call good evil and evil good, and account that as righteousness which is abominable in his sight, and which according to the prophet, he regards as filthy rags. He will enter into strict judgment with these self-righteous, and they shall, like the Pharisees, be rather subjects of his wrath, than objects of his love, or inheritors of his rewards. Doth not Christ himself assure us, that "except our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And which of us even approaches them in righteousness; or, if we live in the practice of virtues, though much inferior to theirs, are we not ten-fold more ostentatious? Who is not pleased to behold himself righteous in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others? or, who is it doubts that such righteousness is sufficient to please God? Yet, we see the indignation of our Lord manifested against such. He who was the perfect pattern of tenderness and meekness, such as flowed from the depth of the heart, and not that affected meekness, which under the form of a dove, hides the hawk's heart. He appears severe only to these self-righteous people, and he publicly dishonored them. In what strange colors does he represent them, while he beholds the poor sinner with mercy, compassion and love, and declares that for them only he was come, that it was the sick who needed the physician; and that he came only to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

O thou Source of Love! thou dost indeed seem so jealous of the salvation thou hast purchased, that thou dost prefer the sinner to the righteous! The poor